

COMPLAINT TO U.N. FILED; BIAS AGAINST HOLY SEE NOTED

On May 15, Bill Donohue lodged a formal complaint with Ms. Navanethem Pillay, High Commissioner for the Human Rights Office of the U.N. in Geneva, Switzerland.

Donohue charged that Felice Gaer, Vice-Chairperson of the Committee Against Torture, has compromised her objectivity and thus has no legitimate role to play in policing the policies of U.N. member states, or states that have been awarded a Permanent Observer status.

He specifically charged Gaer with violating two sets of U.N. strictures governing the objectivity of committee members: the "Guidelines On the Independence and Impartiality of Members of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies," and the "Existing Rules and Regulations on Enhancing and Strengthening the Expertise and Independence of Treaty Body Members."

Both of these documents demand that U.N. committee members show independence and impartiality. "Any reasonable observer would conclude," Donohue said, "that Felice Gaer has violated these 'Guidelines' and 'Rules' by openly taking her directives from the Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR), an organization whose animus against the Catholic Church's teachings on sexuality is palpable. If CRR were just another abortion-rights entity, I would not be lodging a complaint. But its attack on Roman Catholicism is visceral."

Donohue cited a 2000 CRR report, "The Holy See at the United Nations: An Obstacle to Women's Reproductive Health," that seriously crossed the line: it concluded that "the Holy See uses its status at the UN [sic] to obstruct the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women throughout the world."

Donohue noted that Ms. Gaer's relationship with CRR is

incestuous and that she takes more than talking points from it—she cites its reports verbatim in her official U.N. capacity. He provided several examples. He also focused on her violation of the U.N. Charter. He demonstrated how Gaer abuses her authority by challenging the autonomy of the Holy See: She wants to force the Catholic Church to change its teachings on sexuality.

“If it were reversed,” Donohue said, “if the Holy See demanded that U.N. member states align its position on abortion with the teachings of the Catholic Catechism—howls of protest would be heard worldwide. It is just as outrageous when a U.N. committee member instructs the Holy See to get in line with her secular beliefs.”

Donohue also said that the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which issued a report in February, had violated its authority when it told the Holy See that it had to change Canon law on abortion.

To read Donohue’s letter in its entirety, see the section on Special Reports listed on the Catholic League’s website.

SATANISTS AT HARVARD

On May 7, the Catholic League protested a scheduled “Black Mass” on the campus of Harvard University; the Satanic event, which was designed to ridicule the Mass, was set for May 12. But it was cancelled just hours before it was to take place.

The initial response from the university was wholly unsatisfactory, but on the day of the mock reenactment of the Mass, Harvard University President Drew Faust issued a letter condemning the event. She stated that students have freedom of

speech, but she also spoke against the obscene content of this speech.

President Faust branded the mocking of the Catholic Mass “abhorrent,” saying it was “deeply regrettable that the organizers of this event [a student group affiliated with the Harvard Extension School]...have chosen to proceed with a form of expression that is so flagrantly disrespectful and inflammatory.”

President Faust attended a Eucharistic Holy Hour and Benediction at St. Paul’s Church on campus that evening, and she joined Catholics to denounce the event. The students who sponsored it decided to move the Satanic presentation off-campus, but found trouble finding a home.

Bill Donohue issued another statement after President Faust released her letter. He commended her for her words and deeds, but said she could have done more. He drew a distinction between an arena and a university, maintaining that the latter is a community engaged in the pursuit of truth. Hence, it is not obliged to welcome speech that is wholly designed to insult.

FREE SPEECH UNDER FIRE

William A. Donohue

Over and over again, I have said that I would prefer to suffer the indignity of having my religion trashed before endorsing the right of the government to censor the offensive speech. Would there ever be an exception? Of course—no right is absolute. But in almost all cases, having the government silence the offenders is the wrong remedy.

The courts have properly carved out many exceptions to freedom of speech. Falsifying one's credentials is not protected speech. Intentionally lying, with malice, about someone—especially when the person is not a public figure—is not acceptable; that's why we have laws against libel and slander. Copyright infringement is not legal. The sale and distribution of child pornography is not constitutional. Harassing phone calls do not qualify as free speech. There are literally dozens of cases where government has a legitimate right to prohibit, or punish, speech.

It is important to note that only government has the ability to truly censor speech. For example, newspapers turn down letters to the editor every day—they have every right to do so—but they cannot stop views they disagree with from being voiced elsewhere. The same applies to all speech that is expressed in the private sector. If your father, or your employer for that matter, says, "Shut Up," it won't do you any good to claim you are being unfairly muzzled.

These cases are not controversial. Matters become contentious when the legal right to prohibit speech is not the issue, but the moral right to do so is called into question. It is even more contentious when the speech deemed offensive is simply of a disagreeable nature. We don't lack for recent examples.

The campuses are hotbeds of left-wing intolerance these days. Brandeis University banned Ayaan Hirsi Ali from speaking at its commencement because of her pointed criticism of Islam. Smith College pressed Kathleen Lagarde to withdraw from speaking because she is the head of the International Monetary Fund, and that organization is too capitalistic for her critics. Rutgers forced Condi Rice to drop out because her record of fighting terrorism upset them. The former chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, Robert Birgeneau, a flaming liberal, was coerced to withdraw from speaking at Haverford College because in 2011 he asked the campus police to stop anarchists from taking over the campus. Former New

York City Police Commissioner Ray Kelly was stopped from speaking a few months ago at Dartmouth because protesters objected to measures he instituted that resulted in a sharp drop in crime.

It's not just on the campuses where the left-wing tyrants are flexing their muscles. Mozilla CEO Brendan Eich had to resign under pressure because he supports marriage between a man and a woman. "Duck Dynasty" star Phil Robertson was suspended from A&E because he called homosexuality a sin. Two Christian brothers, David and Jason Benham, were dropped by HGTV because they, too, don't approve of two men marrying. Football players are also being censured because they object to public displays of homosexuality.

Here's one that hits home. Fr. Thomas Doyle, a Dominican, is a very unhappy man. Indeed, the dissident priest is in a state of perpetual rage. I am one of the reasons he sulks and flies off the handle. I've never met him, though I have been well aware of his trotting around the nation maligning the bishops any chance he gets. On April 5 this year, he spoke before a group of Catholic malcontents in Hartford, Connecticut begging the bishops to silence me. Doyle said that the bishops "continue to treat victims [of abuse] with disdain at the very least." He then listed seven examples, the last of which was, "Failing to muzzle Bill Donohue."

Doyle is not alone in wanting to silence me. To wit: not a single person at the conference blasted him out for his intolerance. Moreover, Michael Sean Winters of the *National Catholic Reporter* wrote a short piece on this incident asking, "Who wants to muzzle Bill Donohue?" His reply, "Form a line."

What I find so amazing is not that anyone would want to silence me—left-wingers by the dozens have long pleaded with TV producers never to allow me to speak again. And they have done more, though I do not want to go into it, save to mention the politicized attack on me by the IRS (which didn't work).

Nor is it the fact that Doyle is still technically a priest that is surprising. It is the rank hypocrisy of those who always go bonkers when the bishops sanction a theologian, or a wayward nun. Yet when it comes to me, they have no problem demanding that those same censorial bishops shut me up.

There are plenty of lay people, priests, and nuns with whom I sharply disagree, but it would never move me to ask the bishops to silence them. But there is a silver lining: I must scare the hell out of them, and for that I am very happy. Moreover, I am not going away.

THE MEDIA, THE POPE, AND DISINFORMATION

Ronald J. Rychlak

On March 22, 2014, Pope Francis received a group of Italian broadcasters at the Vatican. In an unscripted address, he defined the virtues, mission, and sins of the communication media. While encouraging the broadcasters to carry out their work along the paths of truth, goodness, and beauty, he also warned them about three sins embodied in the media, which he called “the road of lies.” Those three sins are: “disinformation, slander, and defamation.” According to the pope, slander and defamation are serious, but not as dangerous as disinformation.

Pope Francis calls disinformation “the most dangerous sin embodied by the media” because it is a partial truth told for political expediency. With the other two, he explained, truth can eventually be discerned and the error corrected. With disinformation, however, “those who watch the television or

listen to the radio are not able to arrive at a perfect judgment, because they do not have all the elements necessary to do so, and the media do not give them." Stated differently, disproving a false charge is hard, but eventually reasonable people can see through the charges. Disinformation – a misleading partial truth that comes from a seemingly reliable outlet – is much harder to overcome.

The Catholic Church frequently has been the victim of disinformation. Regular readers of *Catalyst* are well aware of campaigns designed to portray all priests and bishops as pedophiles while ignoring issues related to predatory homosexuality. Recently, the motion picture "Philomena" was peddled as a true history when, in fact, it was incredibly misleading and deliberately cruel to Irish nuns. In the recent television series, "Cosmos," host Neil deGrasse Tyson's portrayal of the Catholic Church as being opposed to science was far off base. This, of course, is just the tip of the iceberg.

Pope Francis himself has been the target of disinformation campaigns about his role in Argentina's "dirty war." In 1976, the military kidnapped and tortured two priests. The argument is that Francis (then Fr. Bergoglio) contributed to their suffering, either by refusing to defend them prior to the kidnapping or by failing to help afterwards. Actually, Bergoglio tried to remove them from harm's way, and his later intercession with dictator Jorge Rafael Videla may have saved their lives. Two days after Bergoglio became Pope Francis, the surviving kidnapped priest strongly denied that Francis was in any way at fault for his suffering.

Francis' predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, was often assailed in the press for having been a member of the Hitler Youth when he was a boy. It was less often mentioned that he refused to attend meetings, never joined the Nazi party, deserted the army, and eventually became a prisoner of war.

Pope John Paul II was the target of an elaborate disinformation effort early in his papacy. In 1983, Polish intelligence agents crafted a phony diary purportedly written by a former lover of Cardinal Wojtyla, the future John Paul II. They used the identity of a woman he would have known but who was by then dead. The plan was to leave the diary hidden in an apartment where it would be found during a police raid. Reporters would assume that it was legitimate and write about it as such. As it turned out, however, the agent assigned to plant the fake diary got drunk and was involved in an automobile accident. In an effort to avoid arrest, he explained who he was and exposed the plan. One can only wonder what would have happened had the pope's credibility been damaged early in his pontificate by that disinformation scheme.

No individual Catholic figure has been a greater target of those peddling disinformation than Pope Pius XII, who led the Church from 1939 to 1958. Some things about him were simply made-up, like charges that he met with Hitler, blessed German troops, or tried to kidnap Jewish children. In the 1960s, the play "The Deputy" was shaped, promoted, and produced by Soviet disinformation experts seeking to damage the Church. More recently, the book "Hitler's Pope" used a doctored photograph on the cover, a butchered quotation from Thomas Merton in the front matter, and was largely based on a six page letter that was reduced with ellipses to a few lines that – thanks to misleading translations – makes the future pope seem anti-Semitic. Disinformation like that is hard to counter, and it takes on a life of its own.

Consider how Pius XII's reputation was impacted by overt disinformation created to discredit someone else. During WWII, Croatian Cardinal Aloysius Stepinac was a staunch opponent of the Nazi puppet regime that took charge of his nation (the Ustaša). After the war, Croatia, then part of Yugoslavia, fell under Soviet domination. When Stepinac became a problem for

the new government, authorities charged him with collaboration with the Ustaša. In anticipation of his 1946 trial, the Communist Party published a book that purported to contain documentary proof. The documents, of course, were forged or edited in order to do as much damage as possible. The result of the trial was foreordained. Stepinac was convicted and eventually poisoned to death while under house arrest.

In the 1960s, Italian writer Carlo Falconi sought permission from the Yugoslav authorities to do research in Croatian archives for a book that he was writing on Pope Pius XII. Party officials were in a quandary. If they gave Falconi access to the archives, he would see how the evidence had been manufactured and how documents had been altered. They eventually handed over *some* documents and provided a copy of the book that they had produced prior to trial. On the basis of these documents, Falconi wrote his book, *The Silence of Pius XII*, which shaped much scholarship on Pope Pius XII.

In 1985, Stepinac's prosecutor, Jakov Blažević, acknowledged that Stepinac had been framed and that he was tried only because he refused to sever the ties between Croats and the Vatican. About that same time, one of the former governmental officials who had put together the case against Stepinac explained: "The indictments were designed rather more for publicity than for legality." In 1992, when Croatia came out from under the thumb of Communism, one of the first acts of Parliament was to issue a declaration condemning "the political trial and sentence passed on Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac in 1946."

Unfortunately, the damage had been done; the disinformation was out there, and it remains much cited to this day. In his book so critical of Pope Pius XII (and Pope John Paul II) *Hitler's Pope*, John Cornwell, who could easily have uncovered the truth, cited Falconi by name nine times and praised his "painstaking" research. That is the power of disinformation.

Until recently, Pope Pius XI was the “good pope” against whom Pope Pius XII was compared, but he has now become the target of disinformation that tries to link him with Mussolini. The kernel of truth, of course, is that the Catholic Church had to survive in Rome under Mussolini, but the claim that Pius XI was friendly with Mussolini is absurd. In 1931, while Mussolini was still being favorably profiled in American publications, his “black shirts” regularly beat up Catholics, prompting Pius XI to issue the encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, in which he speculated about Italy’s “ultimate goal of domination” of the Church.

His modern critics argue that Pius XI supported Mussolini’s aggression during Italy’s war with Ethiopia. Their argument is that the pope hoped it would expand the Church’s influence. In reality, however, prior to the invasion of Ethiopia, he spoke out on at least three occasions, condemning Italy’s aggression and calling it a crime against the moral law. Later, when Mussolini ordered Rome illuminated to celebrate Italian victories, Pius kept Vatican City dark.

Mussolini issued his “Aryan Manifesto” in July 1938, calling on Italians to proclaim themselves racists and acknowledge that Jews do not belong to the Italian race. The very next day, Pius XI branded the Manifesto “a true form of apostasy,” and he said that “the entire spirit of the doctrine is contrary to the Faith of Christ.” At least twice more in the following weeks Pius reiterated this position, and his question about “why Italy should have felt a disgraceful need to imitate Germany,” was reprinted on the front page of the Vatican newspaper. He also ordered Catholic universities to refute these false teachings, and he appointed several Jewish scholars to positions of importance in the Vatican, saying: “All human beings are admitted equally, without distinction of race, to participate, to share, to study and to explore truth and science.”

On September 6, 1938, in a statement which—though barred from

the Fascist press—quickly made its way around the world, Pope Pius XI said:

“Mark well that in the Catholic Mass, Abraham is our Patriarch and forefather. Anti-Semitism is incompatible with the lofty thought which that fact expresses. It is a movement with which we Christians can have nothing to do. No, no, I say to you it is impossible for a Christian to take part in anti-Semitism. It is inadmissible. Through Christ and in Christ we are the spiritual progeny of Abraham. Spiritually, we are all Semites.”

The *New York Times* carried a front page story on the statement, and in January 1939, *The National Jewish Monthly* reported that “the only bright spot in Italy has been the Vatican, where fine humanitarian statements by the Pope have been issuing regularly.” The Feb. 1939 issue of *The National Monthly*, published by *B’nai B’rith*, put Pope Pius XI on its cover, along with the headline: “Pope Pius XI attacks Fascism.” Inside the journal, under the title “Pope Assails Fascism,” it stated: “Regardless of their personal religious beliefs, men and women everywhere who believe in democracy and the rights of man have hailed the firm and uncompromising stand of Pope Pius XI against Fascist brutality, paganism and racial theories.” The United States Congress even passed a joint resolution acknowledging Pius XI as a symbol for “the re-establishment of the rule of moral law in human society.” Yet, modern purveyors of disinformation try to discredit the Church by making false accusations against him.

The Catholic Church has often been the victim of disinformation, but there are other victims as well. Today, anyone with a laptop and access to the Internet can reach a large audience. Misleading stories from unproven sources, however, usually can be exposed. The greatest danger comes from sources that we trust. We rely on newspaper and magazine editors to edit out the falsehoods. We expect book publishers to do the same. We need all media professionals to help us

find the truth. That is what Francis meant when he encouraged broadcast journalists to carry out their work along the paths of truth, goodness, and beauty and to avoid the sin of disinformation.

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THE POLITICS OF "JESUS' WIFE"

In 2007, the media were agog over the claim by "Titanic" director James Cameron and TV-director Simcha Jacobovici that the Jesus family tomb had been found. Cameron declared that it had been determined "beyond any reasonable doubt" that the tomb of Jesus and his family had been found. It didn't take long before it was revealed to be a hoax.

In 2012, the media were hyperventilating over the claim by Harvard Divinity School professor Karen King that Jesus may have had a wife. Speaking of the papyrus fragment that is the basis of her claim, King said at the time, "If it's a forgery, it's a career breaker." Now that it has been revealed to be a hoax, neither Karen King nor Harvard are speaking.

Why are the media so easily seduced by such tales? To be sure, such extraordinary claims from apparently credible sources cannot be ignored. But there is something else that is going on as well.

Quite frankly, there is an ideological need to discredit the history of Christianity. If anyone doubts this to be true, all that needs to be done is to examine what happens almost every Easter season: Television, Internet, newspaper, and magazine stories abound with questions over the “real” Jesus. Was he divine? Or was he just a happy carpenter? Sowing the seeds of doubt is the name of the game, making it understandable why claims about Jesus’ family tomb and/or his wife are irresistible. But don’t look for similar stories on the “real” Muhammad.

On September 29, 2012, an editorial in the Vatican newspaper, *L’Osservatore Romano*, called the papyrus fragment an “inept forgery.” In April, three Coptic experts named Christian Askeland, Mark Goodacre, and Alin Suciu, independently concluded that the fragment was a fake. So have several Egyptologists from the United States and Europe.

It’s just a matter of time before someone else claims that Jesus had a wife, or the Resurrection never happened. The politics involved are weighty, and the fanaticism of the players is palpable.

WHAT KING AND EXPERTS SAID INITIALLY

Karen King:

- It casts doubt “on the whole Catholic claim of a celibate priesthood based on Jesus’ celibacy. They always say, ‘This is the tradition, this is the tradition.’ Now we see that this alternative tradition has been silenced.” (*Smithsonian Magazine*, “The Inside Story of a Controversial New Text about Jesus,” 9/18/12)
- “I think the fragment itself is discussing issues about discipleship and family. But certainly the fact that this is the first unequivocal statement we have that claims Jesus had

a wife, is of great interest" (*Chicago Tribune*, "Was Jesus married? Scholar hopes for debate," 9/20/12)

- Evidence of authenticity was strong enough to make her think it was time to invite other scholars to weigh in. In any case, she added, she stood to gain little if she was wrong. "This is not a career maker," said King, a tenured professor at Harvard. "If it's a forgery, it's a career breaker." (*Boston Globe*, "Hint of a married Jesus; Harvard historian's finding may bear on modern Christianity" 9/19/12)

- King conceded to [the reporter] the possibility that the ink tests could yet expose the piece as a forgery. More likely, she said, it "will be the cherry on the cake." (*Smithsonian Magazine*, "The Inside Story of a Controversial New Text about Jesus," 9/18/12)

AnneMarie Luijendijk, Princeton professor and authority on Coptic papyri and sacred scriptures:

- "It would be impossible to forge," said Dr. Luijendijk, who contributed to Dr. King's paper. (*New York Times*, "A Faded Piece of Papyrus Refers to Jesus' Wife," 9/19/12)

Ariel Shisha-Halevy, professor of linguistics at Hebrew University, Jerusalem, who was asked to examine the authenticity:

- "I believe—on the basis of language and grammar—the text is authentic. That is to say, all its grammatical 'noteworthy' features, separately or conjointly, do not warrant condemning it as forgery." (CNN Wire, "Newly revealed Coptic fragment has Jesus making reference to 'my wife,'" 9/19/12)

Roger Bagnall, director of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, at New York University:

- "It's hard to construct a scenario that is at all plausible in which somebody fakes something like this. The world is not

really crawling with crooked papyrologists,” Dr. Bagnall said. (*New York Times*, “A Faded Piece of Papyrus Refers to Jesus’ Wife,” 9/19/12)

Carl R. Holladay, Professor of New Testament studies at Emory University and Church of Christ minister:

- “It’s obviously an important find.” (Laurie Goodstein, “Coptic Scholars Doubt and Hail a Reference to Jesus’ Wife,” 9/21/12)
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“SERRANO’S ART” AUCTIONED BY SOTHEBY’S

Just a couple of weeks ago, Sotheby’s auctioned the Andres Serrano masterpiece, “Piss Christ,” at 9:30 a.m. The taxpayers were forced to fund this “art” in 1987 to the tune of \$15,000; it was supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. “Piss Christ” is Serrano’s primary contribution to Western Civilization: he urinated in a jar with a crucifix.

Serrano has claimed that Christians who complain about “Piss Christ” do not understand that he never intended to insult them. Perhaps it was meant as a “love letter.” No matter, there is no record of him defecating in a jar with a statue of Muhammad. Or a picture of his mother. Perhaps he loves them less.

Sotheby’s is a perfect place to auction “Piss Christ.” In 2005, a print garnered \$42,000. In 2009, it netted \$146,500. In 2011, it went for \$50,000. The one that was recently auctioned was expected to go for \$100,000 to \$150,000. Christie’s sold one for \$105,000 in 2000, and in 2011 another

went for \$314,500.

The Catholic League did not make a bid. But we are interested in interviewing the sucker who bought it. If you know who the lout is, please have him give us a call.

SEXUAL ASSAULT ON CAMPUS

Earlier this year, President Barack Obama established a White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. We commend him for that, but more needs to be done. Colleges and universities need to get up to speed with the progress made by the Catholic Church in combating sexual assault. Moreover, public officials, beginning with President Obama, should give voice to this idea.

Sexual harassment and assault is addressed under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. So far this fiscal year, 30 such complaints have been filed with the Department of Education; this matches the total number filed in all of fiscal 2013. Now the Education Department has released the names of 55 colleges and universities where a complaint has been registered.

Title IX is antiquated, and does not meet the test that Catholic institutions have established. To be sure, it calls for institutions of higher education to take complaints of sexual harassment and assault seriously—immediate action is mandated, including an investigation—but it does not require colleges and universities to notify law enforcement. It's worse than that. As we learned at the end of April, Columbia University administrators recently informed students who filed sexual assault claims that they are not allowed to discuss their cases in public.

In other words, not only are colleges and universities not required to call the cops when they get a credible accusation, they are allowed to silence the accusers. That all of this is happening in institutions where sexism is routinely denounced and free speech is heralded makes it even more disgusting.

It's time the White House called on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to instruct college presidents on how to check this problem.

PASADENA'S PR PROBLEM

Bill Donohue visited Pasadena in the 1990s and found it to be a great city. Unfortunately, its reputation has been tarnished by a series of blunders, all made by public institutions.

Filmmaker Dustin Lance Black contends he was invited to give this year's commencement address at Pasadena City College (PCC), and was then disinvited because a video of him having sex with his boyfriend surfaced. PCC officials say a student leader was to blame for inviting him. PCC then invited Dr. Eric Walsh, head of the Pasadena Public Health Department, to take his place. Then it was learned that he has made bigoted comments about gays, Muslims, and Catholics. So he stepped aside. Then Black was formally invited to speak, and he accepted.

Dr. Walsh has accused Catholics of idolatry for "worshipping" the Virgin Mary. Similarly, statues of the Virgin of Guadalupe, he says, are "a lie of Satan." He has also slammed, and distorted, the Church's teachings on evolution. Moreover, he contends the devil established Catholicism, and the pope is the "anti-Christ."

Donohue was accurately quoted in the *Pasadena Star-News* saying, "Dr. Walsh is not fit to be the head of the Pasadena Public Health Department. It is not worth attempting to rebut the man's bigotry, so outlandish is it. Anyone whose judgment is that impaired has no legitimate role to play in public life."

Regarding the decision to invite, or reinvoke, Black, it smacks of cultural politics to say that "details of Mr. Black's personal life have no place in public discussion." But if the Internet videos of Dr. Walsh's comments are sufficient to disqualify him, why are not the Internet videos of Black?

Pasadena City College and the Public Health Department are funded by the taxpayers. Regrettably, the city now has a major PR problem.

PRAYER AT COUNCIL MEETINGS AFFIRMED

The U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling quite properly considered, and rejected, a challenge to the customary prayers that are said at town council meetings across the nation. These prayers are ceremonial in nature, and, as former Chief Justice Warren Burger said, they are "deeply embedded in the history and tradition of the country." Indeed, the high court opens its own session with the invocation, "God save the United States and this Honorable Court."

Just because the prayers are Christian in nature is not sufficient to ban them. As the majority opinion said, there are many historical examples where sectarian prayers have been invoked, and they "must not be dismissed as the relic of a

time when our Nation was less pluralistic than it is today.” Moreover, in the case before the justices, “The town made reasonable efforts to identify all of the congregations located within its borders and represented that it would welcome a prayer by any minister or layman who wished to give one.” If the prayers were being abused by those bent on a proselytizing campaign, that would be different.

The high court also made a distinction between taking offense at something and making claims of coercion; they are not identical. Similarly, Justice Samuel Alito was right to brush aside the long list of horrors that opponents of such prayers trotted out: anyone can dream up a list of hypothetical situations about any case.

Perhaps the most cogent statement came from Justice Anthony Kennedy. He cautioned against judges being in the business of evaluating the content of prayer: it could lead to legislatures requiring “chaplains to redact the religious content from their message in order to make it acceptable for the public square.”

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court did not eviscerate spurious claims of religious diversity. The fact is that in 2014, 95 percent of Americans who claim a religious affiliation are Christian.

KERRY’S DISTURBING RELIGION REMARKS

Secretary of State John Kerry congratulated the U.S. Embassy staff in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on May 1 for promoting “a universal message about the rights of people to be free, about

democracy, about the ability of people to be able to choose their government and not be oppressed when they speak out or say something." He should have stopped there. Here is what he said next:

"This is a time here in Africa where there are a number of different cross-currents of modernity that are coming together to make things even more challenging. Some people believe that people ought to be able to only do what they say they ought to do, or to believe what they say they ought to believe, or to live by their interpretation of something that was written down a thousand plus, two thousand years ago. That's not the way I think most people want to live."

The Ten Commandments are the moral edifice upon which Western civilization was built. It makes absolute prohibitions on a range of issues. Was Secretary Kerry aiming his remarks at the Ten Commandments? Or was he taking issue with the teachings of Jesus as found in the New Testament? Or were his remarks targeted at the Koran, the religious text of Islam?

We not only contacted the State Department asking Secretary Kerry to explain himself, we listed the email address of the organization's press secretary so our people could communicate with her. They did—big time. Indeed, the press secretary called our office twice to complain.

Finally, Kerry issued a limp excuse that no one believed. We told the media we weren't buying it. We are confident, however, that our message was delivered.